



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

SAY CHEESE! JUNE IS DAIRY MONTH

PATTY RITCHIE June 7, 2016



Milk, ice cream, cheese, yogurt—the list of delicious dairy items made in New York State goes on and on. This month, we celebrate dairy, and the hardworking farmers responsible for the success of this key industry, during “National Dairy Month.”

Established in 1937, National Dairy Month started out as “National Milk Month,” an event held to promote drinking milk. Since that time, the observance has grown into an annual tradition that helps to celebrate our state’s 5,000 dairy farms and all the fresh, nutritious foods they produce.

Here in New York State, dairy means much more than nutritious food and drink—it's a major part of our economy. Here's a look at our dairy industry, by the numbers:

45 percent: Today, the dairy industry is the single largest sector of New York State's agricultural industry, accounting for more than 45 percent of the state's farm cash receipts for all products.

600,000: New York State is home to more than 600,000 dairy cows—that's more than the entire population of the state of Wyoming!

12 billion: That's how many pounds of milk our state produces annually, making New York third among states in total milk production.

\$4.7 billion: That's the value added to New York's economy by agriculture. Half of that amount comes from the direct sale of dairy products from New York farmers.

144: On average, one cow produces 144 servings of milk per-day. That's enough to provide 48 people with 3 daily servings of milk.

As Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, and someone who grew up on a family farm, I'm proud to advocate for our state's hardworking dairy farmers in an effort to help them strengthen their industry and provide New Yorkers with healthy, fresh foods.

Recently, I was proud to lead the fight to secure record funding in the new state budget for programs that are key to dairy farms across the state, including Cornell PRO-DAIRY, a program that harnesses new technology and fresh ideas to increase the profitability of our state's dairy industry, and others that each and every day, are helping New York's dairy farmers become more successful and expand their businesses.

Later this month, I'll be doing my part to highlight the dairy industry when I host "Dairy Day" at the Capitol. This old tradition—which I'm resurrecting along with Assembly Agriculture Committee Chair Assemblyman Bill Magee—brings farmers, producers and manufacturers to the Capitol shine a spotlight on the industry's importance to our state.

From improving health and building strong bones to strengthening our economy, the benefits of New York's dairy industry are many. This month, I hope you will join me, in raising a glass (of milk!) to one of our state's leading industries.